

# Teaching Ecological Responsibility in Islamic Religious Education: A QCA-Informed Reading of Q. 67:17 (al-Mulk)

Ali Murfi<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Islamic Education Management Study Program, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Indonesia

## Abstract

**Purpose** – This conceptual article reframes Q. 67:17 (al-Mulk) as a resource for Islamic religious education rather than only as an ecotheological interpretation. It asks how a Qur’anic threat narrative can be taught to cultivate ecological responsibility, religious literacy, and ecological leadership without reducing contemporary disasters to direct divine punishment.

**Methods/Design/Approach** – This qualitative conceptual study applies Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to four tafsir: Ibn Kathir, al-Jalalayn, al-Wajiz by Wahbah al-Zuhaili, and the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs’ tahlili tafsir. The resulting categories are synthesized with Islamic ecotheology, religious education, Islamic values education, and sustainability education literature to develop a pedagogical framework.

**Findings** – The QCA identifies cross-tafsir categories of ḥāṣibān, false sense of security, social-moral conditions, warnings for individuals, communities, and rulers, and the rahmah-threat tension. The QCA-informed synthesis yields a three-layer model consisting of a textual-tafsiri layer, a normative ecotheological layer, and a pedagogical praxis layer.

**Originality/Value** – The article contributes to religious education research by showing how Islamic scriptural interpretation can support ecological religious literacy, ethically bounded classroom reflection, and practical responsibility in Muslim educational settings.

**Practical Implications** – The model can inform curriculum design, classroom inquiry, institutional culture, and ecological leadership by helping teachers, curriculum designers, and educational leaders connect Qur’anic learning with ecological responsibility while avoiding unsupported causal claims about particular disasters.

**Keywords** Islamic religious education, ecological religious literacy, Q. 67:17, Qualitative Content Analysis, ecological leadership.

**Paper type** Conceptual article

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## 1. Introduction

The global ecological crisis, reflected in the increasing frequency of flash floods, landslides, forest fires, and biodiversity degradation, has been widely documented in various international and national scientific reports, and has positioned environmental governance as an ethical as well as theological issue, particularly in Muslim-majority countries (IPCC, 2022; IPBES, 2019). The dominance of hydrometeorological disasters and the degradation of forest and peat ecosystems indicate that ecological damage is not merely a natural phenomenon, but is closely related to deforestation, forest fires, and governance weaknesses that stem from the political and administrative decisions of public office

holders ([Aeni & Anwar, 2024](#); [Saharjo, 2022](#); [Yuza, 2023](#)). In this context, Islamic ecotheology has developed as an effort to reformulate the relationship between faith and the environment by relying on the principles of wasatiyyah, justice, rahmah, amanah, and the responsibility of human khalifah on earth ([Alumona & Alumona, 2025](#); [Latif et al., 2023](#)). The development of a contemporary Islamic ecotheology framework also includes the idea of ecomoderationism, which emphasizes ecological moderation in consumption, production, and lifestyle, as well as ecosufism, which views nature as tajalli ilahi and therefore places the protection of nature as a spiritual obligation ([Mohamed, 2014](#); [Rozi, 2019](#); [Bensaid, 2023](#); [Shefer-Mossensohn, 2025](#)).

In the field of Islamic education, various studies affirm that education and the life of Muslim communities hold a strategic role in shaping an ecological habitus rooted in tawhid and akhlak ([Mohamed, 2014](#)). The discourse on Islamic education and the environment proposes ecologically oriented education models such as madrasah adiwiyata and fiqh al-bi'ah to build a new awareness that favors ecosystem balance ([Hidayat, 2015](#)). Research on the habits and lifestyles of santri in pesantren shows how internal policies and everyday practices can become a concrete medium for translating ecotheology discourse into sustainable ecological action ([Fua et al., 2018](#); [Romdloni et al., 2024](#)). On the other hand, a mystical approach distilled in the concept of ecosufism departs from Ibn Arabi's thought and positions nature as a manifestation of divine attributes, so that environmental damage is understood as a form of spiritual discourtesy toward the presence of God in nature ([Rozi, 2019](#)). At the cross-identity social level, interfaith cooperation based on the concept of khalifah and the image of God also shows that ecotheology has the potential to become a shared ethical basis for collective responses to the ecological crisis ([Akhlaq, 2018](#)).

Surah Al-Mulk, especially verse 17, presents a firm warning that is highly potential to be read within an ecotheological horizon. The verse contains a rhetorical question about whether humans feel secure from the possibility of being sent a "storm of stones" as a form of punishment from the sky. Mainstream tahlili tafsir understands this verse as a continuation of Allah's warning about punishment that at any time may come in the form of wind mixed with stones that destroys, by referring to the punishment that befell the people of Lut when they denied the Prophet who was sent to them, and by linking it with other verses about punishment from above and below, social fragmentation, and the absence of any protector other than Allah (Q. 6:65; 17:68). This traditional horizon of meaning emphasizes human fragility before cosmic punishment that comes when humans feel safe and belittle the warning. In the contemporary context, especially when flash floods and landslides in various regions such as Sumatra have been shown to be related to forest damage and land-use change, a question arises as to how the cosmic warning of Al-Mulk 17 can be reread as a theological critique of the false sense of security of public leaders who ignore ecological risks in policies of natural and forest governance ([Aeni & Anwar, 2024](#); [Saharjo, 2022](#); [Yuza, 2023](#)). A number of studies have begun to link Surah Al-Mulk with environmental education, for example through a reading of Q. 67:3–4 as the basis of an environmental curriculum that emphasizes the amanah of khalifah and ecosystem sustainability ([Farabi et al., 2025](#)), as well as through an analysis of environmental damage according to science and Al Maraghi's tafsir of Al Rum 30:41, Al-Mulk 3–4, and Al Araf 7:56 that highlights human greed as the root of ecological damage (Q. 30:41; 67:3–4; 7:56) ([Ratnasari & Chodijah, 2020](#)). However, Al-Mulk 17 itself has not been widely made an explicit focus within an ecotheology framework. In this article, the connection between the warning of punishment in the text and contemporary ecological disasters is read in a normative reflective manner and not as a causal claim that every particular disaster event must certainly be a punishment for a particular sin.

Religious education research provides an important frame for this article. Within this scholarship, RE is commonly understood not merely as transmission of religious propositions, but as contextual, interpretive, dialogical, and pedagogically mediated engagement with religious traditions ([Everington, 2013](#); [Jackson, 2008](#)). This perspective is important for the present article because Q. 67:17 is not treated as a proof-text for environmental policy, but as a scriptural resource that requires careful educational

translation. Recent work on religion, ecology, and education further shows that climate change and sustainability learning require hope, critical reflection, and links between scriptural interpretation, environmental responsibility, and educational practice ([Aldrin, 2024](#); [Altmeyer, 2021](#); [Horrell & Davis, 2014](#)).

The wider literature on environmental education and sustainability education also affirms the importance of learning that connects cognitive, affective, ethical, and action dimensions in shaping critical ecological citizenship ([Orr, 1994](#); [Sterling, 2001](#); [Jickling & Wals, 2008](#); [Sauvé, 2005](#)). Placed within religious education, this requires careful pedagogical translation: learners need to understand the textual and theological meaning of a religious source, examine its ethical implications, and connect it to concrete ecological choices without treating the classroom as a site for unsupported causal claims about particular disasters.

Aesthetic and stylistic studies of Surah Al-Mulk affirm that the surah's rhetorical architecture, the iconography of the seven heavens, thematic cohesion, and stylistic variation (tafannun), directs readers' responses to the divine warning ([Gonzalez, 2019](#); [Hussain, 2021](#); [Sicak, 2019](#)). Neurophysiological findings on the calming effects of tilawah are exploratory, but indicate a psychological dimension that can enrich an ecotheological reading, including of verse 17 ([Ismail & Sharif, 2016](#)).

Developments in contemporary tafsir methodology and studies of local tafsir expand opportunities for formulating a layered ecotheological interpretation framework. Studies of Tafsir Al-Mishbah show the importance of linguistic principles, surah cohesion, and cross-references of verses to maintain meaning precision ([Kadir et al., 2014](#); [Sakat et al., 2015](#); [Usman et al., 2015](#)), while studies of imamology and Nusantara tafsir affirm the role of authoritative horizons and social context in reading verses of threat and promise ([Amir Moezzi, 2015](#); [Mustaqim, 2017](#); [Rohmana, 2018](#)). In the domain of environmental theology, contemporary ulama link sacred texts and maqasid al-shari'ah in responding to the ecological crisis, and tafsir-science studies show that ecological damage is understood as the impact of human actions ([Latif et al., 2023](#); [Ratnasari & Chodijah, 2020](#)).

Nevertheless, three limitations remain visible from a religious education perspective. First, Islamic ecotheology studies tend to formulate normative principles, mysticism, education, and community practices without showing how a specific Qur'anic threat narrative can be translated into RE aims, pedagogy, and learning outcomes ([Alumona & Alumona, 2025](#); [Mohamed, 2014](#); [Rozi, 2019](#); [Shefer-Mossensohn, 2025](#)). Second, RE literature has examined interpretive approaches, scriptural engagement, stewardship, sustainability, and climate change, but has not yet developed an Islamic RE model centred on Q. 67:17 ([Aldrin, 2024](#); [Altmeyer, 2021](#); [Horrell & Davis, 2014](#); [Jackson, 2008](#)). Third, studies of environmentally oriented Islamic education, pesantren, madrasah, and pro-environmental behaviour have not yet provided a compact framework that links tafsir-based categories with curriculum design, classroom inquiry, institutional culture, and ecological leadership ([Farabi et al., 2025](#); [Begum et al., 2021](#); [Elihami & Pajarianto, 2025](#); [Romdloni et al., 2024](#)).

These gaps can be summarized as an RE theory gap, namely the need to connect Islamic ecotheology with religious education concepts such as interpretation, religious literacy, responsibility, and hope; a pedagogical method gap, namely the need to translate tafsir findings into teachable principles without overclaiming; and a praxis gap, namely the need to link Islamic values education with ecological citizenship and leadership in Muslim educational settings ([Aldrin, 2024](#); [Altmeyer, 2021](#); [Everington, 2013](#); [Horrell & Davis, 2014](#); [Jackson, 2008](#)).

Departing from this situation, the central problem addressed in this conceptual article is the absence of a concise religious education framework that shows how Q. 67:17 can be taught as a source of ecological responsibility, religious literacy, and ethical leadership. Existing Islamic ecotheology literature provides important theological principles, and Islamic education studies document local practices in pesantren, madrasah, and Muslim communities, but the bridge between tafsir-based interpretation and RE pedagogy remains underdeveloped ([Mohamed, 2014](#); [Hidayat, 2015](#); [Fua et al., 2018](#); [Romdloni et al., 2024](#);

[Bensaid, 2023](#); [Shefer-Mossensohn, 2025](#)). This article therefore reads the cosmic-threat structure of Q. 67:17 as a pedagogical opportunity to form ecological responsibility, while explicitly avoiding the claim that any specific environmental disaster is a direct divine punishment for a specific sin.

This article has two main objectives. First, it formulates a QCA-informed reading of Q. 67:17 that identifies the verse's core tafsir categories and translates them into religious education concepts of interpretation, responsibility, moral imagination, and ecological religious literacy ([Jackson, 2008](#); [Horrell & Davis, 2014](#); [Altmeyer, 2021](#); [Aldrin, 2024](#)). Second, it develops a compact pedagogical model for Islamic religious education and values education, showing how the textual-tafsiri, normative ecotheological, and praxis layers can inform curriculum, classroom inquiry, institutional culture, and ecological leadership in Muslim educational settings ([Begum et al., 2021](#); [Fua et al., 2018](#); [Romdloni et al., 2024](#); [Elihami & Pajarianto, 2025](#)).

In line with these objectives, this study is guided by two research questions. RQ1. How can the cross-tafsir categories of Q. 67:17 be translated into a religious education framework for ecological religious literacy and responsibility? RQ2. What pedagogical principles can guide the use of Q. 67:17 in Islamic values education so that learners connect Qur'anic warning, ecological ethics, and leadership without making unsupported causal claims about particular disasters?

This article contributes to religious education research by showing how Islamic scriptural interpretation can be connected to ecological learning through a bounded pedagogical model. Its contribution is not a new legal ruling or an empirical test of student behaviour, but a conceptual bridge between tafsir, Islamic ecotheology, and RE pedagogy. Methodologically, the article uses QCA to make the textual basis explicit before translating it into teachable principles; practically, it offers an initial framework for curriculum designers, teachers, and educational leaders who seek to connect religious values with ecological responsibility and just governance ([Altmeyer, 2021](#); [Horrell & Davis, 2014](#); [Mohamed, 2014](#); [Begum et al., 2021](#)).

To maintain coherence from the literature gaps to the study design, this article uses the term production of ecological risk to refer to policies and development practices that increase ecological and disaster vulnerability, for example through deforestation, land-use change, and spatial planning that ignores ecosystem carrying capacity. The proposed framework is arranged through a sequential flow: (1) QCA of four tafsir to affirm the textual-tafsiri layer; (2) synthesis of Islamic ecotheology literature, especially wasatiyyah/ecomoderationism, ecosufism, and khalifah, to build the normative ecotheological layer; and (3) pedagogical translation into Islamic religious education, values education, sustainability education, and ecological leadership. With this mapping, aesthetic-stylistic literature, tafsir methodology, and local tafsir reinforce the reading of the verse's warning rhetoric, while RE literature provides the pedagogical lens for learning aims, classroom inquiry, and ethical boundaries.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Design and approach

This study is a qualitative conceptual study that combines Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) of tafsir texts on Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17), a critical synthesis of Islamic ecotheology, and pedagogical translation into Islamic religious education. QCA is used to organize, code, and interpret textual data in order to build categories, while the RE literature is used to translate those categories into learning aims, pedagogical principles, and ethical boundaries for classroom and institutional practice ([Kohlbacher, 2006](#); [Elo et al., 2014](#); [Bengtsson, 2016](#); [Jackson, 2008](#); [Everington, 2013](#)).

This study is not intended for data saturation or broad empirical generalization, but to produce analytical generalization in the form of a QCA-informed pedagogical model for Islamic religious education, values education, and ecological leadership. It does not

construct a new tafsir and does not conduct *istinbat* of legal rulings; instead, it describes and synthesizes the mufassirs' interpretations and then translates them into educational principles in a normative reflective manner.

## *2.2. Unit of analysis and data sources*

The unit of analysis is segments of tafsir text (phrases, sentences, paragraphs) about Q. 67:17 that contain:

- (1) forms and meanings of the threat of punishment,
- (2) social-moral causes and conditions,
- (3) humans' false sense of security, and
- (4) warning messages for individuals, communities, and rulers.

The QCA corpus is purposively limited to four mufassir to maintain focus and depth, namely: Ibn Kathir, al-Jalalayn, Al-Wajiz (Wahbah al-Zuhaili), and the Tafsir of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. The four were selected as representations of classical tafsir, concise-linguistic tafsir, contemporary *fihi* tafsir, and Indonesian institutional tafsir. This limitation of the corpus is recognized, so the findings are not intended as a mapping of the entire tafsir tradition, but rather as a basis for constructing a conceptual model that can be tested in further studies.

Primary data include the text of Q. 67:17 (standard *mushaf*), the official translation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, and tafsir excerpts from those four sources. Secondary data consist of the literature on Islamic ecotheology, environmental *fiqh*, ecosufism, ecomoderationism, the concept of *khalifah*, Islamic education, environmental education, and Integrative Education, which is used as a conceptual lens at the synthesis stage.

The synthesis of secondary literature was conducted through targeted searching and thematic mapping across four clusters: (a) Islamic ecotheology, including *wasatiyyah*/ecomoderationism, ecosufism, *khalifah*, and environmental *fiqh*; (b) Islamic education and environmental education; (c) religious education literature from BJRE and cognate journals on interpretive pedagogy, scriptural engagement, sustainability, stewardship, climate change, and hope; and (d) Integrative Education and sustainability/environmental education. The literature is used as a conceptual lens to link QCA findings with model propositions, not as a systematic review aimed at estimating effects or inferring causality.

Outside the QCA corpus, the article uses one source of popular *da'wah* (a sermon by KH Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim/Gus Baha) as a comparative illustration to show practical resonance of the message of Surah Al-Mulk in public discourse. This illustrative source is not treated as primary data and is not used in the formation of QCA categories.

## *2.3. Data collection*

Data were collected through document study with the following steps:

1. Determining authoritative tafsir sources and tracing the section on Q. 67:17.
2. Copying tafsir excerpts verbatim, including cross-references of verses used by the mufassir.
3. Compiling the excerpts into a single analysis corpus with source and text-location marking.
4. Organizing the secondary literature into a topic matrix for conceptual synthesis.

## 2.4. Analysis procedure

The QCA procedure follows the stages of preparation, coding-categorization, and abstraction-synthesis (Elo et al., 2014; Bengtsson, 2016), with the following adaptations.

1. Preparation: repeatedly reading the tafsir texts on Q. 67:17 and determining meaning units.
2. Coding and categorization: assigning initial codes, then building categories deductively (based on the ecotheology framework) and inductively (based on tafsir patterns).
3. Ecotheological mapping: linking the dimensions of QCA results with ecomoderationism, ecosufism, and the concept of khalifah to formulate tafsir-based ecotheological principles.
4. Pedagogical translation: relating those principles to Islamic religious education, values education, environmental education, and RE literature to formulate learning aims, classroom inquiry principles, ethical cautions, and ecological leadership implications.

The QCA stage provides the textual basis for RQ1, while ecotheological mapping and pedagogical translation together answer RQ1 and RQ2 by showing how tafsir categories can be converted into bounded educational principles.

## 2.5. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are maintained through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Elo et al., 2014; Bengtsson, 2016). Credibility is maintained through explaining the focus, the selection of mufassir, and rechecking categories against the original text. Dependability is maintained through an audit trail of the analysis process and model revisions. Confirmability is maintained by affirming the researcher's position as a content analyst and designer of a conceptual model, and by grounding claims in tafsir excerpts and the literature. Pedagogical credibility is strengthened by making explicit the movement from tafsir categories to RE principles, especially by distinguishing textual interpretation, normative ecological reflection, and classroom use. Transferability is strengthened through descriptions of the mufassir context, the characteristics of the literature, and the study limitations so that readers can assess the possibility of adapting the model to other verses or contexts.

## 3. Results

The results of the qualitative content analysis of Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) are presented as the textual basis for the later religious education model. First, this section presents a literal description of the interpretations of the four main mufassir that constitute the corpus, namely Ibn Kathir, al-Jalalayn, Wahbah al-Zuhaili through Al-Wajiz, and the tahlili tafsir of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Second, these descriptions are abstracted through QCA into thematic categories that describe how Q. 67:17 is positioned within a framework of cosmic threat, false sense of security, collective moral damage, warning for rulers, and the mercy-threat tension. Third, these categories are retained as first-order findings and are not yet treated as direct classroom prescriptions. Their pedagogical translation into Islamic religious education, values education, and ecological leadership is developed in the Discussion section.

The verse that becomes the focus of the analysis is as follows:

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

"am amintum man fis-samâ'i ay yursila 'alaikum ḥāshibâ, fa sata'lamûna kaifa nadzîr"

"Or, have you already felt safe from the One who controls the heaven, that (as a disaster) He sends a storm of stones by Him to you? Later you will know how (the consequence of denying) My warning" (Q. 67:17).

Based on that verse, Table 1 briefly summarizes the literal explanations of the four main mufassir regarding Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17).

**Table 1.** Literal description of tafsir of Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) from four main mufasssir

No.	Mufasssir	Literal summary of tafsir (exegesis) of Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17)	Authoritative reference source
1	Ibn Kathir	Ibn Kathir explains that the phrase "do you feel safe from Allah who is in the sky" refers to Allah who has full power to regulate creatures. The "storm with stones" is explained as wind that carries stones that are thrown at humans, as the punishment mentioned in other verses. This verse comes after the exposition of signs of Allah's power and knowledge, so people who remain disobedient should not feel safe from the possibility that a similar punishment may befall them.	<i>Tafsir Ibn Kathir / Fathul Karim Mukhtashar Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim</i>
2	Al Jalalayn	Al Jalalayn interprets the question "do you feel safe from the power of Allah who is in the sky" as a rebuke that Allah has the power to send "hasiban", namely a very violent wind that rains stones upon humans. The expression "an yursila" is explained as a badal of "man", thus affirming a direct relationship between the Being in the sky and the sending of punishment. The closing "then later you will know how My warning is" is understood as information that humans only realize the truth of Allah's threat when they themselves witness the punishment.	<i>Tafsir al-Jalalayn</i> by Jalaluddin al-Mahalli and Jalaluddin al-Suyuti
3	Al Wajiz (Wahbah al Zuhaili)	In Al Wajiz, Wahbah al Zuhaili explains that Allah who is in the sky is the Being who controls all creatures. This verse affirms whether humans feel safe that Allah will not send a "storm with stones" from the sky that can destroy them. If they remain in disobedience, then later they will know clearly the bad consequences of denying Allah's warning. The main emphasis lies on Allah's power, the nature of punishment that can come from the sky, and the certainty of recompense for deniers.	Wahbah al Zuhaili, <i>Al Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim</i>
4	Tafsir Tahlili Kemenag RI	The tahlili tafsir of the Ministry of Religious Affairs explains that this verse is a continuation of Allah's warning. Humans are reminded not to feel safe from Allah's punishment that at any time can be in the form of wind mixed with stones and destroy them instantly. An example of such punishment is linked with the people of Lut who denied their prophet. This verse is then linked with other verses about the possibility of punishment from above and below, social division, and the absence of any protector other than Allah, so that when the punishment comes humans witness its awesomeness but that knowledge is no longer useful.	<i>The Qur'an and Its Tafsir</i> , Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI)

Based on Table 1, the qualitative content analysis produces several cross-*tafsir* thematic categories that describe how Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) is understood by the four main mufasssir. These categories are arranged in accordance with the focus of the unit of analysis that has been established, namely the form and meaning of the threat of punishment, its social-moral causes and conditions, humans' false sense of security, and warning messages for individuals, communities, and rulers.

First, in the category of the form and meaning of the threat of punishment, all mufasssir agree that the main threat in this verse is the possibility of sending "ḥaṣīban" from the sky, which is explained as very strong wind that carries small stones or a stone storm that destroys. Ibn Kathir and Al Jalalayn explicitly mention wind that pelts humans with stones, while Al Wajiz and the tahlili tafsir of Kemenag formulate it as a stone storm that can destroy humans in a short time. This entire set of interpretations affirms that the intended threat is not merely a metaphor, but is understood as a concrete and cosmic form of punishment.

Second, in the category of social-moral causes and conditions, the Kemenag tafsir and Ibn Kathir clearly link the threat in Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) with the pattern of punishment that befell earlier communities, especially the people of Lut who denied their prophet. Punishment from the direction of the sky is positioned as part of a general pattern of punishment for denial and collective disobedience. Al Wajiz underlines that the threat is directed at those who remain in disobedience, and therefore the indicated punishment is understood as a continuation of *sunnatullah* upon groups that reject warnings. Al Jalalayn

does not mention the name of a particular people, but the sentence structure and its explanation still place this threat within the framework of a rebuke to humans who belittle Allah's power.

Third, the category of false sense of security emerges strongly through the rhetorical question "do you feel safe" which is interpreted by the mufassir as a harsh rebuke to the attitude of humans who live as if they are beyond the reach of Allah's punishment. The four tafsir place the opening phrase of the verse as a breaker of that sense of security. Ibn Kathir emphasizes that this question comes after the exposition of signs of Allah's power and knowledge so that there is no reason for disobedient people to feel safe. Al Jalalayn highlights the rhetorical aspect of the rebuke, while Al Wajiz and the Kemenag tafsir emphasize that this sense of security has no basis because Allah fully controls the sky and is able to send punishment at any time.

Fourth, in the category of warning messages for individuals, communities, and rulers, the closing phrase "fa sata'lamûna kaifa nadzîr" is understood by all mufassir as an affirmation that humans will know the reality of Allah's warning when the punishment truly comes. Ibn Kathir and the Kemenag tafsir add that knowledge at that time is no longer useful to save oneself, because the opportunity to repent has passed. Thus, this verse is read as an early warning so that humans, both as individuals and as groups, do not wait for the coming of punishment to realize the truth of the warning. The linkage made by the Kemenag tafsir between this verse and other verses that mention punishment from above, punishment from below, and social division shows that the warning message is understood to have collective and structural dimensions, not only targeting personal behavior.

Fifth, across mufassir there appears a tension between gentleness and threat. On the one hand, the threat of a stone storm and the example of the punishment of earlier communities show the firmness of punishment for deniers. On the other hand, the placement of this verse after the exposition of Allah's blessings and power, and before punishment truly occurs, indicates that the threat also contains an element of rahmah in the form of an early warning. Thus, Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) is read as part of a sequence of verses that combines argumentation about Allah's power, the granting of blessings, and the threat of punishment, which together form a complete pattern of warning.

This thematic synthesis shows that the tafsir tradition positions Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) as a cosmic-threat verse that also becomes a collective social warning. For the purposes of religious education, these categories function as textual evidence that requires careful pedagogical translation rather than immediate classroom moralization. The ecotheological and educational implications are therefore developed in the Discussion section with explicit attention to interpretive boundaries, ecological responsibility, and the avoidance of unsupported causal claims about particular disasters.

## 4. Discussion

The Discussion develops the QCA results through three sequential steps: first, reaffirming the cross-tafsir categories as the textual basis; second, mapping those categories to Islamic ecotheology principles, especially ecomoderationism/wasatiyyah, ecosufism, and khalifah; and third, translating them into religious education principles for curriculum, classroom inquiry, institutional culture, and ecological leadership. This structure responds directly to the need for the article to contribute to religious education research, not only to tafsir or ecotheology.

### *4.1. Integration of QCA results with Islamic ecotheology principles*

The QCA results show that Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) is consistently understood by the four main mufassir as a concrete cosmic-threat verse that depicts the possibility of sending a stone storm from the sky to a community that denies the warning. This threat is explained as "hāṣiban", namely very strong wind that carries small stones or a stone storm that

destroys, and is linked with the pattern of punishment of earlier communities, especially the people of Lut, thus breaking humans' false sense of security regarding the stability of earth and sky. At the same time, the placement of this verse after the exposition of Allah's blessings and signs of power and before the punishment truly occurs creates a tension between gentleness and threat, which makes this verse function simultaneously as an early warning and a threat of punishment.

The four main categories produced by QCA, namely the form and meaning of the threat of punishment, its social-moral causes and conditions, humans' false sense of security, and warning messages for individuals, communities, and rulers, together with the tension between rahmah and threat, provide a textual basis for an ecotheological reading. The concrete cosmic threat indicates that the structure of nature is not morally neutral, but can become a medium of punishment for collective moral damage. The category of causes and social-moral conditions shows that punishment is linked with denial, disobedience, and social configurations that allow injustice. The category of false sense of security highlights the attitude of humans who live as if they are beyond the reach of Allah's punishment. Meanwhile, the category of warning messages affirms that understanding of divine warning must be present before disaster comes, if it is to have transformational meaning.

The concept of ecomoderationism or wasatiyyah underlines balance, the avoidance of excessive attitudes, and kinship between humans and nature as basic principles of Islamic environmental ethics (Alumona & Alumona, 2025). If the false sense of security condemned in Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) is read within an ecomoderationism framework, it can be understood as a critique of lifestyles and policies that exceed the limits of ecological moderation, for example the exploitation of forests and land-use change that ignores ecosystem carrying capacity and the safety of residents in flood- and landslide-prone areas. The ecosufism approach that views nature as tajalli ilahi adds a spiritual dimension that ecological damage means disruption of the harmony of the relationship between God, humans, and nature (Rozi, 2019). Meanwhile, the concept of khalifah positions humans, especially power holders, as parties who are morally and theologically responsible for the preservation or destruction of the ecological order and can become an ethical meeting point for interfaith cooperation (Akhlag, 2018; Latif et al., 2023).

Thus, the categories of concrete cosmic threat, false sense of security, and the social-structural dimension in the QCA results provide a strong textual basis for linking Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) with the principles of ecomoderationism, ecosufism, and khalifah as pillars of Islamic ecotheology. This layer of analysis directly contributes to answering RQ1, namely formulating a layered ecotheological interpretation model that departs from the mufassir's tafsir and is rearticulated within a contemporary Islamic ecotheology framework.

#### *4.2. Religious education contribution: ecological religious literacy and pedagogical boundaries*

The move from tafsir findings to religious education requires more than applying a verse to an environmental topic. In the interpretive approach to RE, religious traditions are taught as internally meaningful, contextually situated, and pedagogically open to reflection rather than as flat sources of predetermined answers (Jackson, 2008). For this article, that means Q. 67:17 should be taught through three linked tasks: understanding how mufassirs explain the verse, examining how the verse challenges false security and irresponsible power, and inviting learners to reflect on ecological responsibility in their own institutions and communities.

This pedagogical boundary is crucial. The verse may ethically challenge ecological negligence, but classroom use should not claim that a specific flood, fire, or landslide is certainly a direct punishment for a named sin or group. Such a boundary aligns the article with RE literature on critical scriptural engagement, sustainability, stewardship, and hope, where religious texts are used to deepen moral reasoning and responsibility rather than to close inquiry (Aldrin, 2024; Altmeyer, 2021; Everington, 2013; Horrell & Davis, 2014).

### *4.3. Aesthetic, stylistic, and contemporary da'wah dimensions in an ecotheological reading*

The QCA findings above become richer when placed within the context of the aesthetic and stylistic dimensions of Surah Al-Mulk. Aesthetic studies show that the iconography of the seven heavens and the pattern of mathematical typology within it forms a kind of metaphysical mirror of cosmic order and the fragility of the human position ([Gonzalez, 2019](#)). In this sequence, the repeated rhetorical question "do you feel safe" in verses 16 and 17 becomes a rhetorical device that shakes the reader's sense of security and exposes the illusion of fragile stability. Stylistic studies and modern hermeneutics affirm that variations in language style and the forms of threat and promise in the Qur'an are not merely ornaments, but strategies that direct how readers respond to the divine message ([Hussain, 2021](#); [Sicak, 2019](#)).

Neurophysiological findings on the tilawah of Surah Al-Mulk that show a calming effect (although still exploratory) suggest that this surah can work simultaneously in the affective domain and the domain of warning ([Ismail & Sharif, 2016](#)). Within an ecotheology framework, this dimension strengthens the reading that the cosmic threat functions to shake excessive security and to cultivate awareness of ecological fragility.

A sermon by KH Ahmad Bahaudin Nursalim (Gus Baha) illustrates how the message of Surah Al-Mulk can be translated into da'wah language that is close to ecological experience, especially the affirmation that humans should not be lulled by a sense of security and should be more careful in managing the earth. This illustration shows the practical resonance of the rhetorical message of Q. 67:17 as an ethical reminder to protect the environment.

Thus, Gus Baha's sermon strengthens the ecotheological reading that relies on the aesthetic and stylistic dimensions of the surah, while also showing continuity between the written tafsir tradition and popular da'wah practice. In line with the research method, Gus Baha's sermon is not included in the main QCA corpus, but is used as a comparative illustration that shows the practical resonance of an ecotheological reading of Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) at the level of popular da'wah and opens a bridge toward the domains of education and the formation of ecological character.

### *4.4. Tafsir methodology, local tafsir, and translation into Islamic religious education*

Studies of Tafsir Al-Mishbah affirm the importance of linguistic principles and the cohesion of related verses for reading Q. 67:17 within a network of warnings about punishment from above and below, social fragmentation, and the absence of any protector other than Allah ([Kadir et al., 2014](#); [Sakat et al., 2015](#); [Usman et al., 2015](#)). This framework aligns with the QCA results that position cosmic threat as a collective warning regarding social-moral configurations that allow damage to grow.

Local Nusantara tafsir shows a tendency to ground verses in socio-economic problems and structural critique, so that threat verses can function as a foundation for forming a praxis of justice ([Mustaqim, 2017](#); [Rohmana, 2018](#)). In environmental theology, tafsir-science studies affirm that ecological damage is understood as a result of human greed and moral deviation ([Ratnasari & Chodijah, 2020](#)), while research on environmentally oriented Islamic education shows the potential of educational institutions to shape an ecological habitus based on tawhid and akhlak ([Hidayat, 2015](#); [Romdloni et al., 2024](#)).

With that framework, the threat of a stone storm can be read as an ethical warning against policies and development practices that produce ecological vulnerability (e.g., deforestation and spatial planning that ignores carrying capacity). The concept of khalifah requires public leaders to consider the impacts of policy on the preservation of life, property, progeny, and ecosystems as part of maqasid al-shari'ah ([Latif et al., 2023](#)), and at the same time can be operationalized in curriculum and institutional culture to strengthen students' ecological responsibility ([Hidayat, 2015](#); [Mohamed, 2014](#)).

Thus, Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17), when read through the lenses of contemporary tafsir methodology, local Nusantara tafsir, environmental theology, and RE pedagogy, opens space for two connected implications. First, it enables a structural critique of environmental

governance and development practices that ignore the mandate of khalifah. Second, it supports Islamic religious education and values education by providing a scriptural case for ecological religious literacy, reflective moral judgment, and practical responsibility. This dimension strengthens the answer to RQ2 by showing how the layered model can be integrated into curriculum, classroom inquiry, school culture, and educational leadership without turning the verse into a simplistic explanation of particular disasters.

#### *4.5. Pedagogical model for Islamic religious education and ecological leadership*

Departing from the integration of QCA results, Islamic ecotheology, religious education theory, tafsir methodology, and research findings in Islamic education and environmental education, this article proposes a pedagogical model for teaching Q. 67:17 in Islamic religious education. The model is composed of three layers that move from textual understanding to normative reflection and then to educational praxis.

The first layer, the textual-tafsiri layer, affirms that Q. 67:17 contains a concrete cosmic-threat structure, historical references to earlier communities that denied, the breaking of humans' false sense of security, and a collective warning dimension that touches moral and social configurations. In an RE setting, this layer supports careful textual learning: students first examine the verse and tafsir evidence before moving to ethical or ecological application.

The second layer, the normative ecotheological layer, links that threat structure with three main principles of Islamic ecotheology. Ecomoderationism interprets false security as a warning against exceeding ecological limits in lifestyles and policy ([Alumona & Alumona, 2025](#)). Ecosufism interprets environmental damage as disruption of harmony between God, humans, and nature ([Rozi, 2019](#)). The concept of khalifah positions communities and leaders as accountable for decisions that preserve or weaken ecosystem sustainability and can support interfaith and cross-sector cooperation ([Akhlag, 2018](#); [Latif et al., 2023](#)). In RE terms, this layer turns tafsir categories into ethical concepts for reflection rather than into deterministic explanations of disaster.

The third layer, the pedagogical praxis and ecological leadership layer, translates those values into educational design. It emphasizes learning aims such as ecological religious literacy, moral reasoning, ecological citizenship, and responsible leadership; learning processes such as text study, case inquiry, reflective dialogue, and institutional ecological audit; and ethical cautions that prevent fear-based pedagogy or unsupported claims about divine punishment. This layer aligns the model with religious education research on interpretive pedagogy, scriptural engagement, stewardship, sustainability, and hope ([Aldrin, 2024](#); [Altmeyer, 2021](#); [Everington, 2013](#); [Horrell & Davis, 2014](#); [Jackson, 2008](#)).

Hypothetically, this model can be operationalized through learning units that invite students to read Q. 67:17 and selected tafsir excerpts, compare the category of false security with local ecological risks, conduct a simple ecological audit in the school or pesantren environment, and design collective actions based on the value of khalifah. For educational leaders, the same framework can inform school policies on waste, water, energy, green spaces, and disaster preparedness, thereby linking Qur'anic learning with institutional responsibility.

Popular da'wah illustrations show that the ecotheological message of Surah Al-Mulk can be communicated in accessible language, but such illustrations should remain secondary to the tafsir corpus and the pedagogical argument. Thus, the layered model in Figure 1 summarizes the answers to RQ1 and RQ2: it formulates a QCA-informed interpretation of Q. 67:17 and translates it into Islamic religious education and ecological leadership.

**Table 2.** Pedagogical translation of Q. 67:17 for Islamic religious education

QCA category	RE learning aim	Pedagogical use	Boundary/caution
ḥāṣḥiban / cosmic threat	Understand Qur'anic warning language	Read Q. 67:17 with tafsir evidence and discuss ecological vulnerability	Do not treat threat language as a prediction of a specific event
False sense of security	Identify moral complacency	Compare textual warning with local ecological risk narratives	Avoid blaming victims of disaster
Collective moral damage	Develop ecological responsibility	Review waste, water, energy, and land-use habits in school or community	Distinguish moral reflection from causal proof
Warnings for rulers	Link khalifah with leadership	Analyse institutional decisions and design an ecological action plan	Do not reduce leadership to individual piety only

Figure 1 visualizes the proposed three-layer model; Table 2 then specifies how the QCA-derived categories can be translated into RE learning aims, pedagogical uses, ecological activities, and ethical boundaries.



**Figure 1.** QCA-informed three-layer pedagogical model of Q. 67:17 in Islamic religious education and ecological leadership.

## 5. Conclusion

This article departs from the need to connect Islamic scriptural interpretation with religious education research on ecological responsibility, sustainability, and hope. It asks how the cross-afsir categories of Q. 67:17 can be translated into a religious education framework, and what pedagogical principles can guide its use in Islamic values education without making unsupported causal claims about particular disasters.

The results of the qualitative content analysis of four tafsir show that Surah Al-Mulk (Q. 67:17) is consistently understood as a concrete cosmic-threat verse. This verse presents the possibility of a stone storm that is linked with the punishment of earlier communities, breaks humans' false sense of security regarding the stability of earth and sky, and affirms the collective and structural dimensions of the consequences of denial. The cross-afsir synthesis produces key categories on the form and meaning of the threat, the underlying social-moral conditions, false sense of security, and warning messages for individuals,

communities, and rulers, with the distinctive tension between rahmah and threat as its complete frame.

Integrating these results with ecomoderationism, ecosufism, and the concept of khalifah produces a three-layer pedagogical model. The textual-tafsiri layer supports careful interpretation of the verse and its tafsir evidence. The normative ecotheological layer links the warning structure with ecological moderation, spiritual awareness of nature, and the mandate of khalifah. The pedagogical praxis layer translates those values into curriculum, classroom inquiry, institutional culture, ecological citizenship, and leadership. Thus, RQ1 is answered through the formulation of a QCA-informed RE framework, while RQ2 is answered through pedagogical principles that connect Qur'anic warning, ecological ethics, and responsible leadership.

Theoretically, this model contributes to religious education by showing how Islamic scriptural interpretation can be used to develop ecological religious literacy and reflective moral judgment. Methodologically, it demonstrates the potential of QCA to make the textual basis of a pedagogical model explicit before educational translation. Practically, the model offers curriculum designers, teachers, and educational leaders a concise framework for linking Qur'anic learning with ecological responsibility, institutional practice, and just governance.

This study remains limited by its small tafsir corpus, conceptual design, and focus on only one Qur'anic threat verse. Further research should test the model in Islamic religious education classrooms, pesantren, madrasah, and Muslim community programmes; examine students' responses to threat narratives and ecological responsibility; and compare Q. 67:17 with other Qur'anic ecological or warning passages.

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**Ali Murfi:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Formal analysis; Validation; Visualization; Writing - Original Draft; Writing - Review & Editing.

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### Data availability statement

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### Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologie

The author declares that no generative AI tools were used to generate, draft, analyze, interpret, or substantially revise the scholarly content of this article. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the article.

### Ethical Approval and Informed Consent

Ethical approval was not required because this study used document-based sources and did not involve human participants. Informed consent was not applicable.

### Declaration of interest statement

No potential competing interest was reported by the author.

### Additional information

Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to the **Corresponding Author**, Ali Murfi, at ✉ alimurfi1@gmail.com

**ORCID**Ali Murfi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5879-6476>**References**

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